

**An Application to the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission for  
Landmark Designation**

**Hoyt Residence  
2849 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue**



CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER  
2016 SEP 13 PM 1:52  
COMMUNITY PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT

Prepared by Councilman Rafael Espinoza  
September 2016

**1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Hoyt Residence  
Current Name: 2849 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

**2. Location**

Address: 2849 West 23rd Avenue

Legal Description:

Original: Town of Highlands, C H Walkers Sub, Block 23, Lots 21 & 22  
Current: City and County of Denver, C H Walkers Sub 02321 Block 23 Lots 21 & 22  
Parcel Number: 02302-119011-000

**3. Owner Information**

Name: Judith Baptista  
Address: 2849 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Denver, CO 80111.  
Phone: (303) 725-0456  
Email: co.judith.baptista@gmail.com

**4. Applicant/Contact Person (If other than owner)**

Name: Councilman Rafael Espinoza  
Address: 1437 Bannock St. Rm 451 – Denver, CO 80202  
Phone: 720-337-7701  
Email: Rafael.Espinoza@denvergov.org

**5. General Data:**

Date of construction and major additions/alterations: Completed - 1889, No major alterations or Additions  
Source of Information: Denver City Directory 1889, Sanborn Insurance maps, Site observation

Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings: One, Garage, between 1930 and 1951  
Source of Information: Sanborn 1930-1951 maps, site observation

Approximate lot size and acreage: 6,260 square feet or .14 acres  
Source of Information: Denver County Assessor Real Property Records

Architect or Builder: Unknown  
Source of Information: NA

Original Use: Residence  
Source of Information: 1889 Denver City Directory

Present Use: Residence  
Source of Information: Memo Report of Findings for Certificate of Non-Historic Status, Community Planning and Development, Denver Landmark Preservation August 15, 2016

Previous field documentation (date and surveyor): Memo Report of Findings for Certificate of Non-Historic Status, Community Planning and Development, Denver Landmark Preservation, August 15, 2016

National Register Status and date (listed, eligible, study list): Not Applicable

## **6. Statement of Significance**

### **History.**

*The Hoyt Residence meets Significance Criterion 1C: Have direct and substantial association with a person(s) who had influence on society:*

The residence at 2849 West 23rd Ave is significant under history for its association with Merrill H. and Burnham F. Hoyt. Merrill and Burnham Hoyt were renowned Denver architects who had substantial influence on the development of the city. The original home owner, Wallace Hoyt with his wife, Lydia, and their sons, Merrill and Burnham, resided at 532 Agate St (now 2849 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue) beginning in 1889<sub>3</sub>, pg. 488. Merrill and Burnham resided in the house until 1907 and 1908 respectively. Merrill practiced architecture while residing in the house as evidenced by the South Logan homes designed in 1905.<sup>5</sup> By 1907 Merrill had married<sub>4</sub> and moved to W.36<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In 1908 Burnham left Denver to study architecture in New York City. Upon Burnham's return to Denver in 1919, he partnered with Merrill forming the architectural firm of Hoyt and Hoyt. From 1919 to 1926 the firm designed numerous buildings in the Denver area. During this period Burnham returned to his parent's home at 2849 W 23rd Ave.

Burnham Hoyt, who long outlived his brother Merrill, is widely recognized as Colorado's foremost mid-20th century architect. His designs include Lake Junior High, the Park Hill Branch Library, and most famously, Red Rocks Amphitheater. Burnham's last project would be the Denver Central Public Library in 1955. <sup>14, 16 & 17</sup>

### **Architecture.**

*The Hoyt Residence meets Significance Criterion 2A: Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type;* The house holds architectural significance as a fine example of the Queen Anne style dwellings erected in North Denver during the late nineteenth century. Representative features of the style found in the house's design include the complex roof, irregular plan with projecting bay and ornamented brackets and bargeboards. The steeply pitched complex roof form, varying wall materials of brick, stone, and decorative shingles; the multiple belt courses, the paneled entry door; entry porch with turned posts are all common features of the Queen Anne style. Other notable features include the stone window sills, the large south and east windows divided from the transom above by a bullseye detailed rail, and the tall brick chimney with decorative brick detailing. This late Victorian style was very popular for the dwellings of prosperous families in Northwest Denver during the neighborhood's earliest period of development. With the 1889 date of construction, the house fits within the development pattern of the area. Queen Anne style structures were typically constructed in Denver during the boom years of the 1870s through the early 1890s.<sup>22</sup>

### **Geography.**

*The Hoyt Residence meets Significance Criterion 3A: Have a prominent location or be an established, familiar, and orienting visual feature of the contemporary city.*

The steeply elevated location of the house faces the thoroughfare of West 23rd Avenue overlooking Jefferson Park. For more than 125 years the Hoyt Residence has taken in the sweeping views of Jefferson Park.

*The Hoyt Residence meets Significance Criterion 3B: Promote understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;*

The structure's design and iconic site make an important contribution to Denver's urban environment as an early and increasingly rare historic residential type in the area of Jefferson Park.

## **7. Architectural Description**

a. *Concisely describe the structure and its surrounds.*

The Hoyt Residence is located on the north side of 23rd Avenue between Decatur and Elliot Street opposite Jefferson Park. The house sits about mid-block on a "Denver Hill". Non-historic split faced concrete masonry unit retaining walls accommodate the steeply rising grade. The lower wall is topped by an ornamental picket metal fence that faces 23rd Avenue. There are non-historic concrete walks and steps leading to the front entrance porch on the south. The street facing yard site has mature evergreen tree to the southwest of the house and a mature deciduous tree to the south east. The steep grade of the site enhances sweeping views of Jefferson Park.

*b. Describe character defining features.*

The house retains its original Queen Anne massing and form, proportions, scale, and exterior finish materials. Character defining features include:

- Steeply pitched (12/12) complex hipped and gable main roof with small gabled south dormer.
- Asymmetrical primary south elevation.
- Decorative bargeboards with shell details and decorative brackets.
- Palladian and one over one sash windows.
- Entry porch with gable roof supported by turned columns.
- Painted brick as the primary wall material.
- Random patterned rectangular shingles at upper gable walls.
- Story and a half bay projection at the east elevation.
- Stucco finish brick foundation wall with contrasting color.
- Stone window sills.
- Projecting brick belt courses.
- Brick window 'hood' detailing with soldier brick segmental arch at south and east elevations. The window hoods have a unique scroll and acanthus leaf detailing on each side.
- Southeast chimney with decorative brick detailing at the east 1<sup>st</sup> floor wall and corbel detailing near chimney cap.

*c. Describe location and setting including physical context and relationship to neighborhood and other historic structures.*

The house holds a prominent location across from Jefferson Park. The Queen Anne style, at one time common in the area, is now increasingly rare due to extensive demolitions in the Jefferson Park neighborhood.

- d. *Architectural description including mention of major features, uncommon or unique design features, ancillary structures, and important landscape or site features. Also describe interior spaces with extraordinary design features (if any).*

#### South Elevation

The asymmetrical primary elevation has a projecting 1½ story front gabled bay on the east. A projecting, one-story gabled roof entrance porch on the west end (Photograph 1 & 2).

The features of the entrance porch include: front gable roof with a solid wood frame gable wall; a decorative grill at the upper gable wall and molding on the raking bargeboards. Turned posts support the porch roof. A panel door serves as the main entrance.

Centered above the entrance porch on the upper story is a small gable roof dormer with double-hung sash window with painted stone sill. The front gabled main projecting bay to the east has wide decorative bargeboards with sunburst and shell details, shingles on the upper gable wall, and decorative support brackets at the eaves. The first floor main parlor window is a wide one over one sash. The parlor window has a painted stone sill. A wood transom bar ornamented with bullseye details divides the parlor window from the transom window above. Above the transom is an unusual segmental soldier brick segmental arch and window hood. The window hood has a unique scroll and acanthus painted stone detail on each side. The segmental arch infill panel directly above the transom has a decorative grill detail.

At the upper floor centered above the parlor window are paired double-hung sash windows divided by a wood pilaster and with a wide stone sill. Above these windows is a wood transom bar with bulleye details. The brick belt courses details are found 1st floor window sill level (3 courses high) 1st floor window head height (3 courses high) and at upper floor window sill height (2 courses high). (Photographs 1 through 9)

#### East Elevation

The belt courses continued across the east wall. At the southeast chimney location, between the middle and lowest belt courses, decorative brick detailing is present. There is a 1½-story projecting gable roof bay centered on the east wall. In place are decorative bargeboards with scroll support brackets matching those at the south elevation. Centered on the east side of the projecting bay are Palladian windows at each floor level. The Palladian windows have a large center single light sash adjoined by one over one sash windows on each side. The first floor window has a similar soldier brick segmental arch and window hood as described for the south elevation. A transom window sits above the upper floor Palladian window. The north portion of the east elevation is the stucco finish wall of the now infilled 1st floor porch. (Photographs 2 & 9)

#### North Elevation

This elevation is comprised of a single story hipped roof brick wing. A small shed roof tops the now enclosed north east corner porch. Almost centered on the north elevation is a panel entry door with a rowlock brick segmental arch above. A second chimney with projecting brick course sits where the single story portion joins the main 1½ story portion of the house (Photograph 10).

#### West Elevation

Features on this elevation include:

- Belt courses at the upper and first floor window sill height.
- One over one sash window, at stair landing with soldier brick segmental arch above.
- Two, one over one sash first floor windows.
- One over one sash triple window at upper floor.
- Wood shingle at gable wall above upper windows.
- Molding on the bargeboards.

(Photographs 11 & 12)

- e. *Describe major alterations to the exterior of the structure and any known plans to alter the exterior.*

Based on the series of the Sanborn Insurance Maps and contemporary observations, the house is in its original exterior configuration. No major alterations to the exterior of the main structure are known. A small formerly open porch at the northeast corner of the house appears to have been enclosed and the walls finished with stucco. Out buildings show at the northwest and northeast areas of the property on the 1893 Sanborn map. The 1951 Sanborn map indicates the earlier out buildings were removed and replaced by a new out building located at the northeast portion of the site. This is most likely the brick garage structure currently on site. The south yard landscape retaining walls and walks and landscape items at the

east yard appear to be relatively recent.

There are no known plans to alter the exterior. However, the Application for Non-historic Status submitted by the current owners indicates potential for demolition of entire residence and outbuildings and probable alteration of site topography.

*f. Include a statement describing how the building currently conveys its historic integrity.*

The house retains its original: elevated 'Denver hill' setting overlooking West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Jefferson Park, massing, form, fenestration rhythm, proportions, materials, scale, and Queen Anne style features.

## **8. History of the Structure and Its Associations**

*a. Describe the history of the structure and its associations with important individuals, groups, events, or historical trends.*

The parcel is first listed by the clerk and recorder in 1888 under the ownership of Wallace Hoyt, with ownership of the property transferred to Wallace's wife, Lydia Hoyt, in 1901.<sup>20</sup> The senior Hoyt's 1888 selection of a choice site across from Jefferson Park was prophetic. The city of Denver did not commit to creating a park here until 1899. It took until 1912 for the park to become a reality.<sup>19, pg. 214</sup> No original building permits could be located for this structure. The 1889 City Directory lists Wallace Hoyt as residing at 532 Agate St.<sup>3</sup> The home remained in the Hoyt family for 42 years until Lydia's death in June 1931.<sup>6</sup> Merrill and Burnham Hoyt became prolific and highly noted Denver Architects. They were both raised in the residence. From this home the brothers walked to the local schools, including the Boulevard School and North High School, from which they both graduated. The 1907 City directory shows both brothers working at different architectural firms as draftsmen and still residing at their parents' home. Merrill H. Hoyt began his career as a draftsman for the firm of William E. Fisher in 1899. Merrill remained with the firm until he formally began his own architectural practice in 1915. City building permits indicate he completed on his own residential designs as early as 1905<sup>3</sup>, permits #1757, 1758 and 1759. The Delta National Bank, built in 1910, represents one of the earliest known Merrill Hoyt designs. Its design predates by at least five years the formal establishment of his own practice. There is no mention of the Fisher firm in any of the records regarding the design or construction of the bank. It appears that Hoyt was moonlighting.<sup>16</sup> Merrill's practice prospered and was respected in Denver business circles. During the 1920s, Merrill was president of the Colorado Chapter of the A.I.A., vice-president of the Denver Building and Loan Association and a leader of the Allied Architects, who designed and supervised construction of the Denver City and County Building.<sup>14</sup>

In 1908, Burnham Hoyt left the West 23rd Avenue home and moved to New York City to study at the Beaux Arts Institute in New York City. He then trained at the prominent New York firm of George B. Post and Bertram Goodhue. Hoyt then served for two years in the Army during World War I, designing camouflage.<sup>14, 17</sup>

Burnham returned to Denver and the West 23rd Avenue home in 1919 and became partners with Merrill, in an architectural firm named M.H. and B. Hoyt.<sup>3, 17</sup> From 1919 – 1926 they designed numerous buildings in the Denver area, including the Fourth Church of Christ Science building, the Park Hill Branch Library, the Denver Press Club, the Lake Junior High School, the Hendricks House, and Cherokee Castle. During this time Burnham resided at 2849 W 23rd Ave.<sup>3, 1923, pg. 1229</sup> In 1926 Burnham Hoyt moved back to New York to work for an architectural firm, then as a professor, and eventually as Dean of the School of Architecture at New York University. While Burnham was in New York, Merrill continued work in Colorado until his sudden and untimely death in February 1933<sup>6</sup>. Merrill's death placed immediate demands on Burnham's time to complete current commissions in the Denver office. In 1936, Burnham married Mildred Fuller, sister of Denver interior designer Thornton Fuller. The couple decided that year to return to Denver permanently.

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Hoyt's most important work followed, fully developed and strongly contemporary. He continued and expanded his firm's tradition of fine house design. Examples of his mature modern work survive today, both in fashionable sections of the city— Circle Dive, Polo Grounds, Morgan District, Cherry Hills—and on country and mountain estates. He also continued to teach during the depression years for the benefit of architectural students at the Denver Atelier.<sup>14 and 16</sup>

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Some of the more interesting projects during this final period of Burnham’s career were the Boettcher School for Crippled Children at East 19th and Downing, and the Albany Hotel addition on 17th, famous for its elegant lobby with a grand mezzanine staircase, curved exterior wall corners and early use of glass block around windows. Burnham also planned important additions to the Broadmoor Hotel; Colorado Springs High School, cited for its functional planning solution; and extensive revisions and additions to the Central City Opera House complex.

Hoyt designed the masterful adaptation of natural topographic features and rock formations to create the Red Rocks Amphitheater, a project which brought him immediate national acclaim in architectural and art publications. It was later selected by the Museum of Modern Art in New York as one of fifty outstanding examples of American architecture of the decade. Hoyt received many awards and wide public recognition, including associate membership in the National Academy of Design in New York, an honorary doctorate from Denver University and the Civic Princeps award from Regis College.

Hoyt was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in the early fifties, and by 1955 he was forced to close his practice. Burnham Hoyt died at his Denver home in 1960.<sup>14 and 16</sup> In August 2015 the National Park Service designated Red Rocks Park and its Amphitheater as a National Historic Landmark.

*b. Provide details about the circumstances of construction including the date of construction, architect, builder, and owner for the original structure and any significant additions.*

Original construction occurred no later than 1889. Little can be documented about the circumstances. The original owner, Wallace, his wife Lydia and their very young sons, Merrill and Burnham, resided at 532 Agate St as of 1889.<sup>3</sup> Merrill resided here through 1907, then moving to 2509 West 36<sup>th</sup> Av. Burnham resided here until moving to New York in 1908, returning in 1919 and staying in the house until he returned to New York in 1926.<sup>16</sup> Lydia remained in the house following the death of Wallace in November 1926, until her death in June 193.<sup>6</sup> There were no significant additions to the house.

*c. Describe specific historical associations including why this structure has direct association with the individual, group, event, or historical trend.*

See 8a above.

*d. Describe other structures that have similar associations and the relationship of this structure to them.*

NA

*e. Include a statement describing the historic context for this structure. Include geographic area, time period, relevant themes and property types associated with the historic context.*

The historic context revolves around a high style residential design on a prominent location. The Hoyt Residence stands as an increasingly rare surviving North Denver example of the affluence reflected by the Queen Anne residences that came about in the Denver boom years of 1870s to the early 1890s. The house and the geography of the site command the streetscape and take advantage of the sweeping views of Jefferson Park.

**9. Owner Consent to Designation:**

I/We, the undersigned, acting as owner(s) of, the property described in this application for landmark designation do, hereby, give my consent to the designation of this structure as a Structure for Preservation.

I understand that this designation transfers with the title of the property should the property be sold, or if legal or beneficial title is otherwise transferred.

Owner(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Owner(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

*If the owner does not consent to designation, please describe the reasons for recommending designation:*

The application for a Certificate of Non-Historic Status was posted on the home at 2849 W 23rd Avenue in Jefferson Park on August 16, 2016.<sup>21</sup>

The home is eligible for individual landmark designation as it meets the criteria in all three significance categories:

- History - strong association with Burnham and Merrill Hoyt, extremely important 20<sup>th</sup> Century Colorado architects.

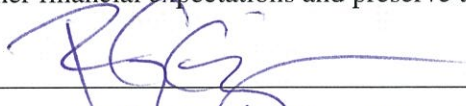
Hoyt Residence - Landmark Designation Application

- Architecture - an increasingly rare and fine example of the Queen Anne style in Jefferson Park.
- Geography - prominent 'Denver Hill; location overlooking West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Jefferson Park.

The owner has filed a certificate of non-historic status under the demolition permit process. Designation will prevent the loss of this Denver and Jefferson Park iconic structure.

*Provide a statement describing efforts that have been made to contact the owner to talk about designation and possible alternatives:*

Historic Denver and Denver City Council Member Espinoza have reached out multiple times to the current property owner, but at this point the owner has not engaged. Historic Denver has offered to work with her to find a buyer for the property that would meet her financial expectations and preserve this important place for the larger community. 21

Applicant(s):  Date: 9/13/2016  
RAFAEL ESPINOZA, COUNCILMAN (Please print) DISTRICT 1

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

Applicant(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

Applicant(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
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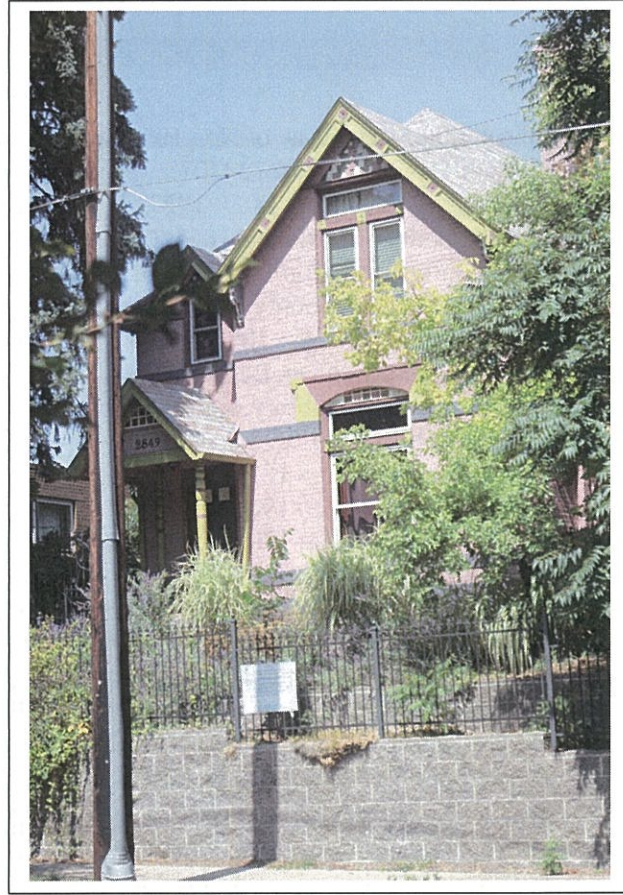


**10. Resources**

1. Application for Certificate of Non-Historic Status,
2. County of Denver Assessor's Office - Real Property Records
3. Denver City Directories, 1889 -1923
4. Montana, County Marriages, 1865-1950," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-267-11832-92877-62?cc=1609797> : 21 May 2014), 004278536 > image 683 of 881; county courthouses, Montana.
5. Denver Building Permits, 1889 to 1904, and 1905 to 1914, Denver Public Library
6. *Denver Obituary Project*, Denver Public Library, <https://history.denverlibrary.org/research/obituaries>
7. American Publishing 1889 Perspective Map of Denver
8. Sanborn Insurance Map 1893
9. Sanborn Insurance Map 1904
10. Baist's Real Estate map 1905
11. Sanborn Insurance Map 1929 -30
12. Sanborn Insurance Map 1929 -30, Corrected to 1951
13. Denver Householder's Directory and Street Guide 1924 - 1937
14. Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren, *Denver, The City Beautiful*, Historic Denver, Inc. 1987, 1993, pgs. 203 -205
15. *Field Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture & Engineering*, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation of the Colorado Historical Society, July 2008 [http://www.historycolorado.org/sites/default/files/files/OAHP/crforms\\_edumat/pdfs/1625Field.pdf](http://www.historycolorado.org/sites/default/files/files/OAHP/crforms_edumat/pdfs/1625Field.pdf)
16. *Architects of Colorado Biographical Series*, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, History Colorado <http://www.historycolorado.org/oaHP/architects-colorado-biographical-series>
17. *Burnham Hoyt; Architect of the North Wing of the Central Library*, Denver Public Library <https://www.denverlibrary.org/content/burnham-hoyt>
18. Virginia Savage McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Knopf, 2013
19. Phil Goodstein, *North Side Story*, New Social Publications, 2011
20. Community Planning and Development, Memo Report of Findings for Certificate of Non-Historic Status, August 15, 2016
21. Electronic mail, from Executive Director, Historic Denver, 30 August 2016
22. Wilk, Diane, *A Guide to Denver's Architectural Styles and Terms*, Historic Denver Inc. 1995

**11. Photographs**

1. South view



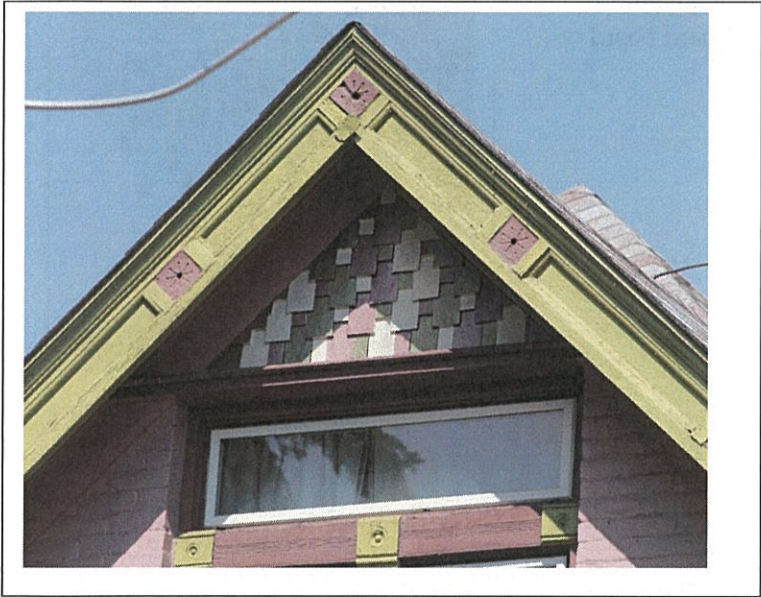
2. Southeast view



3. South elevation - upper wall detail

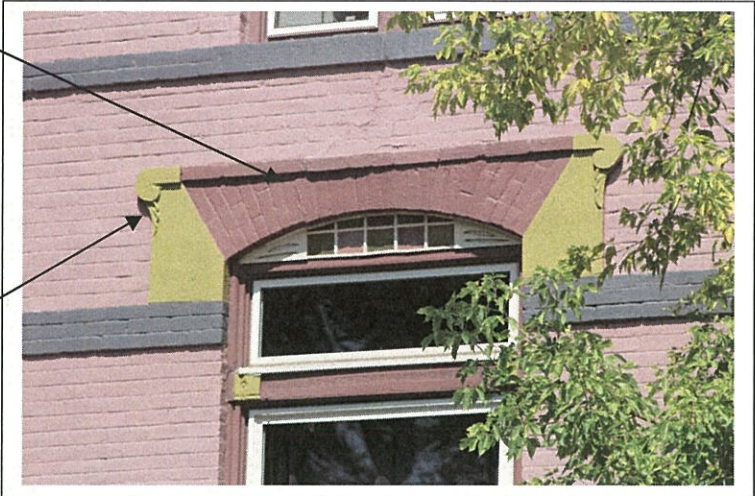


4. Upper gable wall shingles and sunburst details at bargeboards.

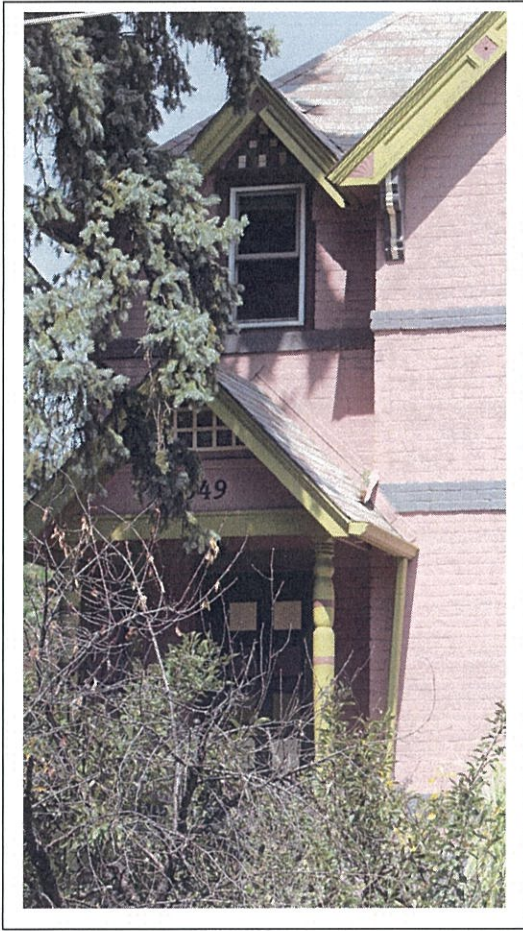


Soldier brick segmental arch at window hood.

Scroll and Acanthus detail



5. South Window Detail



← 6. Entry porch and gable dormer detail.



7. Scroll bracket with → shell detail at bargeboard board.

8. Painted belt course and stone sill detail

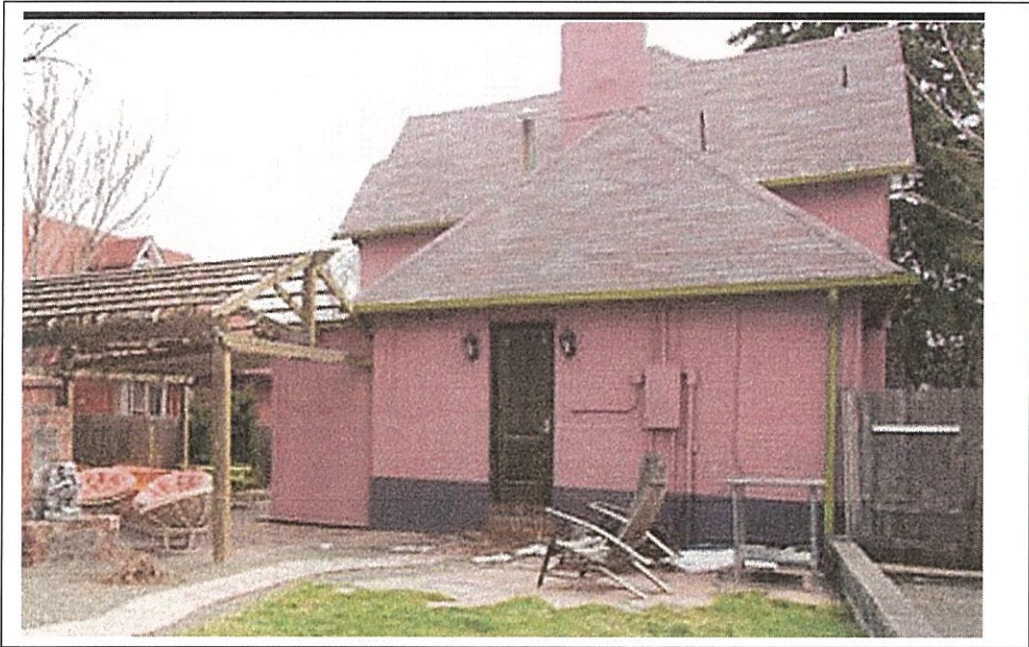




Palladian window with window hood.

Stucco finish at historically open rear porch.

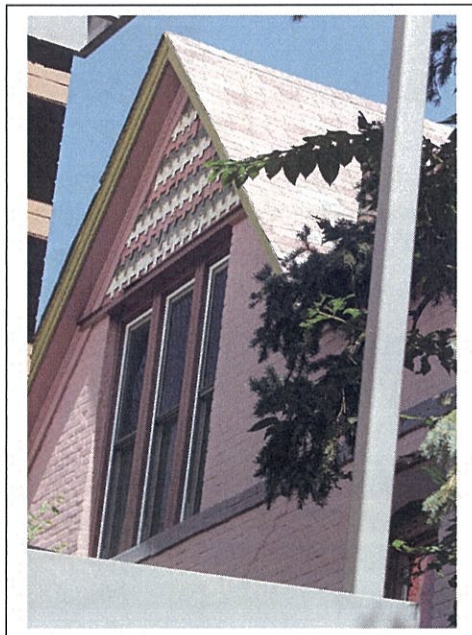
9. Partial view of East elevation



10. View of North Elevation

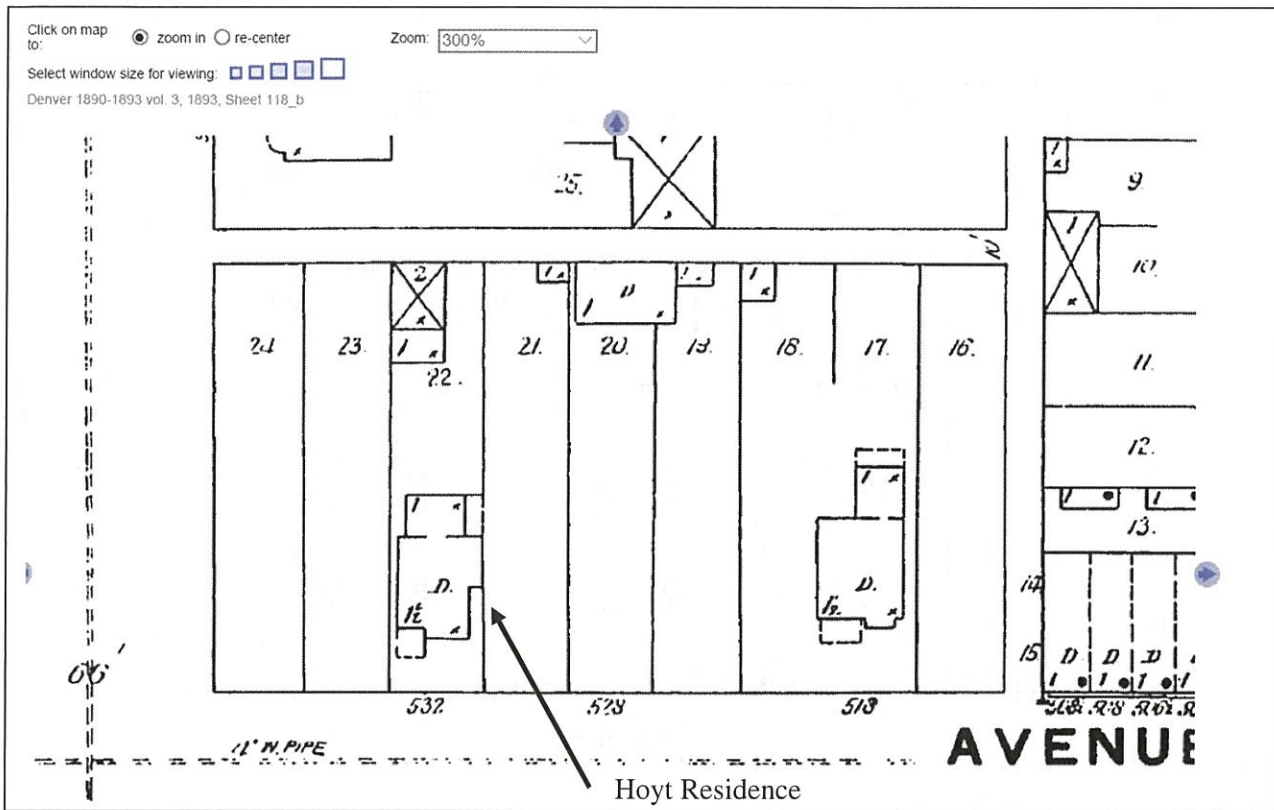


11. View of Upper West Elevation

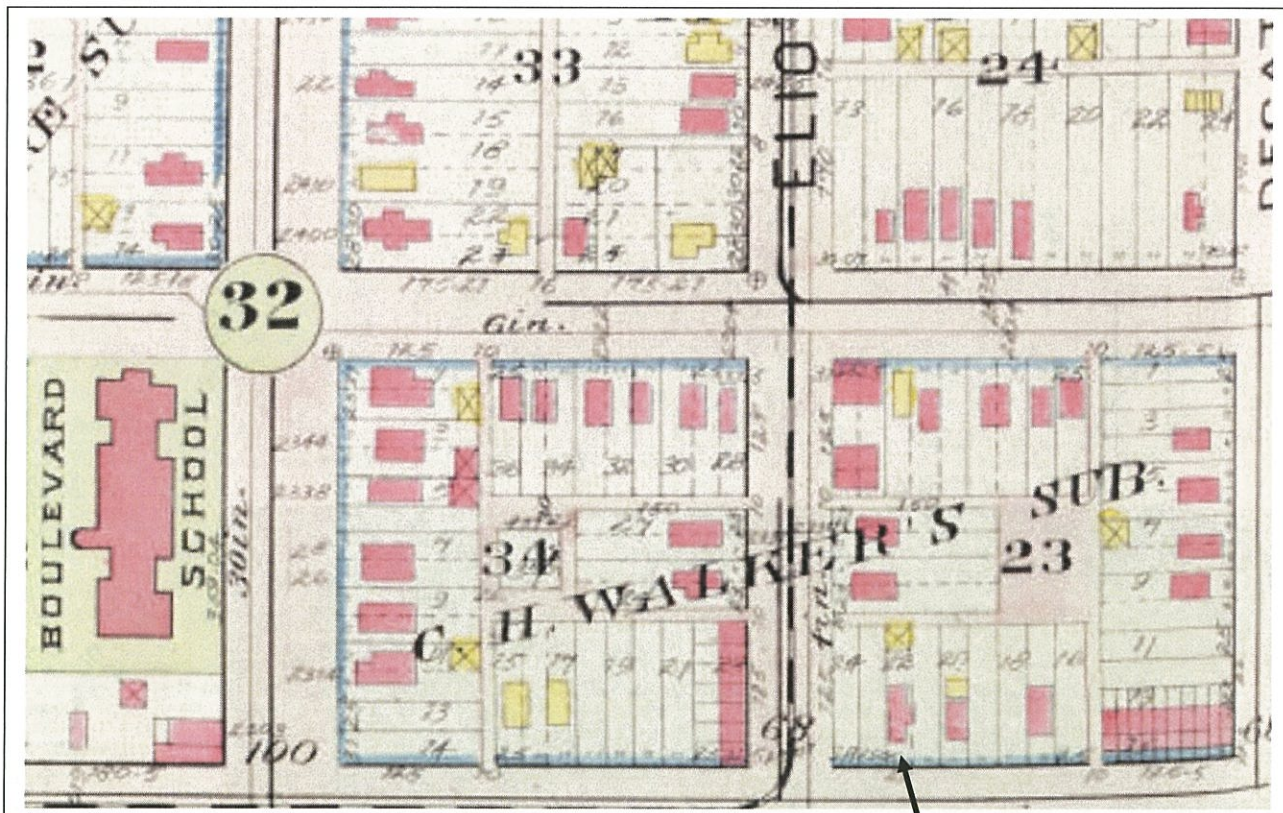


12. Detail of Upper West Windows

12. Site map

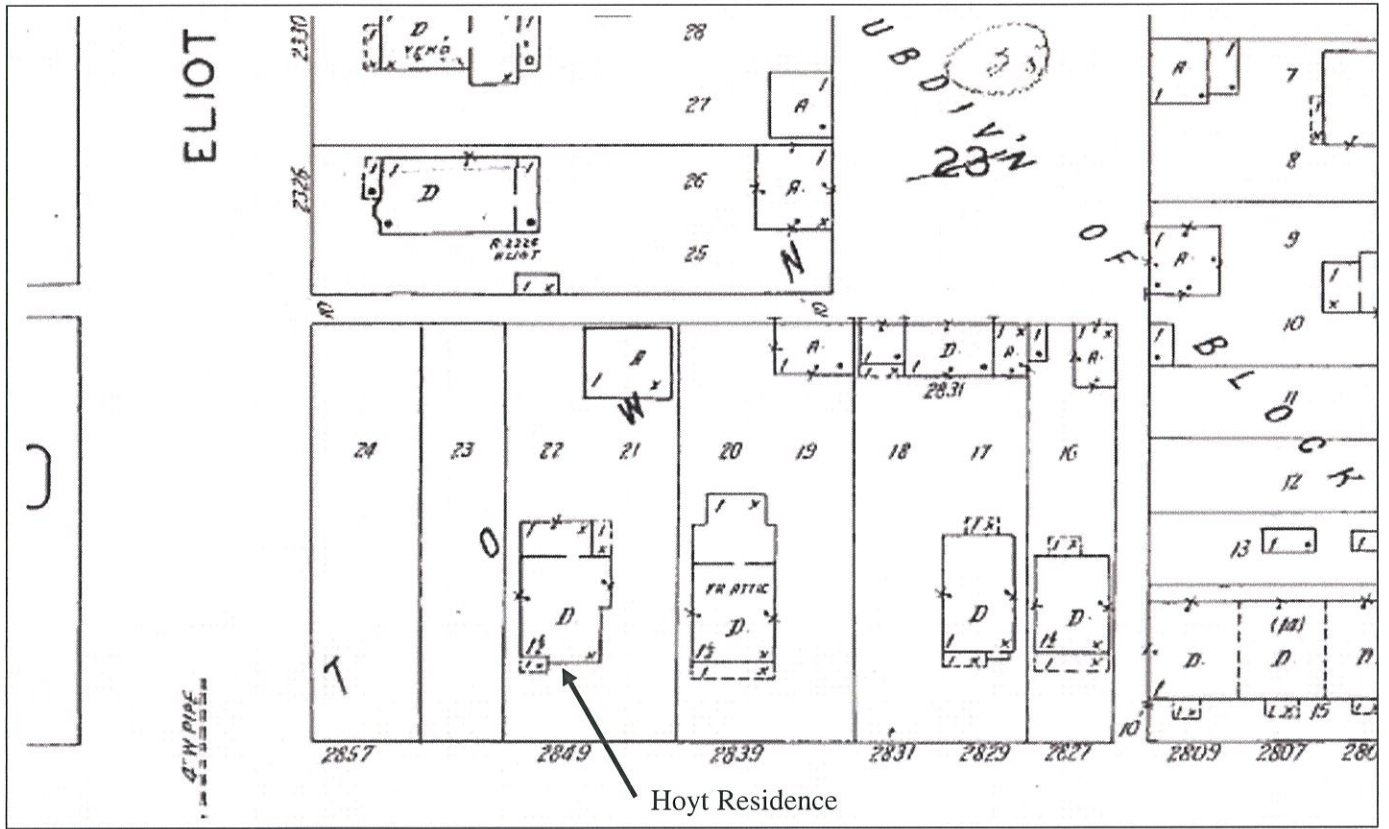


1893 Sanborn Map



Excerpt from 1905 Baist's Real Estate Map

12. Site map (cont'd)



1951 Sanborn Map (1929-1931 corrected to 1951) – note changes at outbuildings along north property line.



Contemporary site plan



